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focus of the month

Health Care with Emphasis on the "Care"

Mrs. Katherine Layton



By Janet Schwenke

When the announcement was made that the Navy Dispensary was merging with the Army and moving to the Presidio, the first question a good many of us asked was, "will I still be able to see Mrs. Layton?" Mrs. Katherine Layton, licensed nurse-practitioner, late of the Navy Dispensary, now working as a nurse at the Presidio, has provided for most Navy wives and dependents in Monterey what sick bay and flight surgeons have never been able to provide for our husbands.

Exactly what this quality is cannot easily be put into words, but that it can readily be felt is evidenced by the large numbers of devoted patients who declared as long as they could that they would not consider being seen by anyone else.

The stories are legion. "After shuttling from Navy doctor to Army doctor and getting the old run-around every time, finally I got to Mrs. Layton. She listened to me, took tests no one had bothered to take before, referred me to the proper specialist, and my problem was cleared up. Before her, I felt that no one had really taken me seriously. I won't go to anyone now but her."

"When I had a serious problem (to me, though it wasn't classified as an emergency yet by the desk) and they wouldn't give me an appointment 'til two days later, Mrs. Layton stepped in and took me after official closing time. It turned out she probably saved me a trip to the emergency room later that evening."

And on it goes. It seems that Mrs.

Layton's greatest gift is an ability to grasp, care about, and treat the whole person. Never has she made a patient feel guilty for taking up her precious time. It takes a rare individual who, after treating two young children for simultaneous cases of viral pneumonia, recognizes when the mother comes in with fever and cough, that what she needs even more than a chest x-ray is a shoulder to lean on for a moment and a chance to lay down her burdens for a while. I was the mother in question, and I will never forget what Mrs. Layton did for me that day. She gave me the only medicine that could have helped, in the form of an arm around my shoulders, and precious understanding. "I have seven children," she said. "Don't you think I understand how you feel?" When I started to cry, she dimmed the lights in her office, and allowed me to stay there (despite the crowded waiting room) as long as I needed to get it all out of my system. That was exactly what I needed. When she came back I was more than ready to get on with whatever had to

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Most of Mrs. Layton's patients leave smiling after their visits with her. Marilyn Jenkins is no exception. Mrs. Layton's ability to make everyone feel better transcends medicine.

be done. It is that sort of thing that makes Mrs. Layton so special to everyone who knows her.

In recognition of this special quality of hers, and her years of dedicated, hard work for all of us, the Executive Board of the OSWC recently presented Mrs. Layton with a token of our love and esteem. The gift is a color photo plaque picturing Herrmann Hall. Mrs. Layton says it is especially meaningful for her because the camera angle encompasses

the exact patch of lawn where her husband's retirement ceremonies were conducted. Mrs. Layton's husband, by the way, is the same "Red" Layton who contributes so much to the NPS Little Theatre.

Incidentally, in answer to the question in the first paragraph, it still is possible to see Mrs. Layton, with a little effort. She is currently working in cooperation with Navy doctors Bond and Berner, and can see patients by request out of their offices. □

CLASSMATE's Backbone — Glenda Phillips


Glenda Phillips sure is going to be hard to replace. She is one of those rare human beings who takes care of all the loose ends and cheerfully accepts the jobs no one else wants. Glenda has been a member of the CLASSMATE staff through six editors and has seldom missed a meeting. She has been a tireless source of advice, ideas, and assistance. She never complains when asked to phone everyone on the staff at the last minute or when she lugs half her kitchen to the staff meetings so we can have coffee.

Glenda has served as Assistant Editor for over a year, and is currently Second Vice-President of OSWC. She has even recruited her husband Tom to help CLASSMATE. His fine pen and ink sketches have been featured in the magazine and recently on the advertising rate cards.

Unfortunately for CLASSMATE, Tom graduates in March and the Phillips will be leaving Monterey. The magazine has come through many crises, thanks in part to Glenda. We will miss her.

Our list of people who have given above and beyond would not be complete without Glenda and we thank her. □





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